

## **ISRAELOLOGY**

### **Part 6 of 6**

by Arnold Fruchtenbaum

### **OTHER RELEVANT TOPICS**

This series of six articles has organized Israelology chronologically. However, certain issues related to Israelology do not conveniently fit a category of past-present-future; some are timeless issues; others fit all three time zones.

This final segment will cover symbolic representations of Israel, anti-Semitism, and the integration of Israelology into systematic theology as a whole.<sup>1</sup> These topics complete a basic study of Israelology.

### **Symbolic Illustrations of Israel**

The Bible gives symbolic illustrations of the Messiah's relationship to the Church such as *bridegroom* and *bride*, *head* and *body*, *shepherd* and *sheep*, *vine* and *branches*. These topics usually receive attention in Ecclesiology. Likewise, various symbolic illustrations of Israel (following) belong to any work on Israelology.

### **God's Son**

Exodus 4:22–23 refers to the nation Israel as God's son. That sonship relationship was the basis for God calling His (national) son out of Egypt through the Exodus (Hosea 11:1). Thus, Israel had the right to address God as "Father" (Isaiah 63:16; 64:8), though it often proved to be a rebellious son (Isaiah 1:3–4; Jeremiah 3:22).

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: Part 1," *CTS Journal* 5 (April–June 1999): 28–30, for the need to remedy systematic theology's past failure to deal comprehensively with Israelology.

### **God's Treasure**

When Israel arrived at Mount Sinai, God decreed Israel to be His own peculiar treasure mined from *among all peoples*<sup>2</sup> (Exodus 19:5; cf. Deuteronomy 14:2). Psalm 135:4 declares that God chose Israel for Himself and made her His own treasure. Israel's national election caused this. Thus, God sought to rescue His treasure from Egypt. Matthew 13:44 compares the Mystery Kingdom to a treasure hidden in the field; during the Mystery Kingdom era, God will gain a remnant from Israel.<sup>3</sup>

### **Kingdom of Priests**

Part of Israel's calling was to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6). A priest represents man to God. Israel's one priestly tribe (Levi) was set apart from the other tribes to represent the nation to God. Israel as a whole was to be a holy nation set apart from other countries as a priestly nation to represent them to God.

### **Jehovah's Vineyard**

The vine even more commonly symbolizes Israel than the fig tree. Isaiah 3:14–15 accuses Israel's leadership of spoiling God's vineyard (Israel) when they oppressed the people. Isaiah 5:1–7's elaboration on this theme begins with the Song of the Vineyard (5:1–2). It pictures a vineyard planted on excellent soil with day-long sunlight. The farmer did everything to make it produce. However, instead of yielding edible grapes (justice and righteousness), the nation produced wild sour grapes (oppression), for which it would suffer discipline. Later, Isaiah 27:2–6 depicts a brighter future for this vineyard. God will

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture citations are taken from the *American Standard Version* (ASV), 1901.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: Part 2," *CTS Journal* 5 (July–September 1999): 36–39, for a treatment of the parables of the Mystery Kingdom. *Ibid.*, 38, deals with the Parable of the Treasure specifically.

replant and carefully watch, so Israel will blossom, bud, and produce fruit for the entire world. In the future kingdom, Israel will bring justice and righteousness among the nations.

Jeremiah 2:21 pictures Israel as a *noble vine* and a *right seed* that became *the degenerate branches of a foreign vine*. This pictures Israel slipping into idolatry. Like Isaiah, Jeremiah 12:10–11 charges Israel's leadership with desolating the vineyard. The *many shepherds* turned God's vineyard into a *desolate wilderness*. Hosea 10:1–3 pictures Israel as an extremely fruitful *luxuriant vine*, but only producing idolatry. Like Jeremiah, Hosea uses the vineyard motif to accuse Israel of gross idolatry.

The vine motif appears again in Israel's national pleading for the Messiah in Psalm 80:8–16. At the Exodus, God brought a *vine out of Egypt* and planted it in the land of Israel. The nation will plead for the Messiah to deliver them at the Second Coming.

Jesus Himself pictured Israel as a vineyard misused by her leaders in Matthew 21:33–46.<sup>4</sup> Israel's leaders, having killed the prophets, will soon kill the Son. The *householder* is God the Father; the *vineyard* is Israel; the *husbandmen* or keepers are the Jewish leaders; the *servants* are the prophets; and the *Son* is the Messiah. Matthew 21:43–44 makes the application:

*Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And he that falleth on this stone shall be broken to pieces: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will scatter him as dust.*

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<sup>4</sup> Parallel accounts appear in Mark 11:1–12 and Luke 20:9–19.

Israel's leadership recognized that the parable applied to them in verse 45:

*And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.*

God rescinded the offer of the Messianic Kingdom to that generation of Israel, especially from its leaders. He will offer it to a future Jewish generation whose leaders will be different. When that future leadership accepts it, the vineyard will become what Isaiah 27:2–6 prophesied.

### **The Clay and the Potter**

This relationship emphasizes that God *the potter* has absolute authority to shape (or even to shatter) Israel *the clay*. Therefore, it is foolish for Israel to deny that God made her or that the Maker of Israel lacks understanding (Isaiah 29:16). It is as foolish for Israel to object to God's plan for Israel as for clay to strive against its maker (Isaiah 45:9). Though Israel *the clay* did object in the past, they will submit in the future, recognizing that God knows best (Isaiah 64:8).

Jeremiah used this motif extensively. In Jeremiah 18:1–12 the potter represents God and the clay represents Israel. As the potter has full control over the clay, so God has perfect authority to judge Israel. This theme appears again in Jeremiah 19:1–15. Just as Jeremiah broke the earthen vessel, shattering and scattering it, so will God break, shatter, and scatter Israel and Jerusalem. Likewise, Romans 9:19–24's discussion of the potter and the clay accords with this Old Testament motif regarding Israel's national election.

## Jehovah's Servant

Isaiah uses the term *servant* in three different ways. One refers to the Messiah (42:1–4; 49:1–13; 52:13–53:12). The other two usages relate to Israel: either to the nation (in general) or to the Remnant of Israel (in specific).<sup>5</sup>

In regard to the whole nation, one example is Isaiah 42:18–43:13. Although Israel is the servant of Jehovah, her blindness has caused her to become a plundered people. The passage then promises redemption. As Israel's Creator, God fully intends to redeem Israel. Isaiah then describes the final regathering from the four corners of the earth. After God accomplishes all of this, Israel will testify on God's behalf.

Isaiah 44:1–5 again picks up the servant motif. It declares Israel to be a chosen servant (44:1), formed by God (44:2). For that reason the servant nation is destined for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit (44:3), leading to national salvation (44:4–5). It is because Israel is the servant of Jehovah that Isaiah 44:21–23 promises her a national salvation. Israel's servant status is still true, although at this time she does not know the Lord (Isaiah 45:4). For this same reason, God will redeem Israel from Babylon (Isaiah 48:20).

## God's Flock

Like the Church, Israel has a shepherd-sheep relationship with God. The one shepherd is God; the shepherds (plural) are the Jewish leaders; and the sheep (or flock) is Israel (Psalm 28:9; 78:52; 80:1). Jeremiah 23:1–4 illustrates. God accuses the Jewish shepherds of causing Israel's scattering (*scatter the sheep of my pasture*). God intends to regather *the remnant of my flock* and return them to the land. At that time God will give Israel

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<sup>5</sup> Examples of the latter use appeared under Israel Future regarding the tribulation remnant (Isaiah 41:8–20; 65:8–16). Cf. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: Part 4," *CTS Journal* 6 (January–March 2000): 53.

righteous shepherds, who will feed the flock with knowledge and understanding and never lead Israel astray. In that day, if they are ruled by human shepherds, God Himself will be their Chief Shepherd to care for them (Isaiah 40:11; Jeremiah 31:10). Ezekiel 34:1–31 is an extended prophecy against the unrighteous shepherds, who not only lead the flock astray and failed to feed it, but finally scattered the flock, after having feasted upon it. God will now judge the shepherds and remove them from leadership. As for the sheep, He will gather them from around the world to return them to the land for feeding, watering, and healing.

Zechariah 11:4–14 views the motif as messianic in nature, as the prophet plays the part of the good shepherd rejected by the leaders. Zechariah 13:7 predicts that rejecting the Messianic Shepherd will lead to His death, scattering the flock of Israel further. Jesus identified Himself as the Messianic Good Shepherd, who would willingly lay down His life for the sheep (John 10:1–18). Furthermore, Jesus has *other sheep*. . . *which are not of this fold*. The sheep of *this fold* are the Jewish sheep. The *fold* is Israel and the believing sheep of *this fold* are the Remnant of Israel. The *other sheep* are Gentile believers.<sup>6</sup>

### **God's Inheritance**

Deuteronomy 9:29 and 32:9 are the first passages symbolically illustrating Israel as God's inheritance. At Saul's anointing as Israel's first king (1 Samuel 10:1), Samuel

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 25:31–46 pictures the Gentile believers of the Tribulation as sheep. Cf. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: Part 4," 60–61. Therefore, not only does the Church have a shepherd-sheep relationship with the Lord (cf. 1 Peter 5:2–4), but Christ also sustains a similar relation outside of the Church. Thus, before Pentecost, Christ said that He had Jewish and Gentile sheep (which are not of this fold). At the judgment of the sheep and the goats, He will also have Gentile sheep, which in turn does not deny that He will have Jewish sheep. So, what is unique about the Church? During the present dispensation, believing Jewish and Gentile sheep become *one flock* under *one shepherd*, the *one new man* (Ephesians 2:11–16).

proclaimed *Jehovah hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance*. In dedicating his Temple, Solomon declared Israel to be God's people and inheritance rescued out of Egypt (1 Kings 8:51). This is a common motif in the Psalms.<sup>7</sup>

### **Jehovah's Wife**

The Bible represents Israel as the *Wife of Jehovah*, whereas the Church is the *Bride of Christ*. Israel's relationship as Jehovah's wife undergoes six distinct stages of development.

#### **Stage One: The Marriage Contract**

The entire format of Deuteronomy is that of both an ancient treaty and an ancient marriage contract. In other words, in writing Deuteronomy, Moses presented various facets of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers in the form of an ancient marriage contract. This book contains the marriage contract signed between Israel and God—where Israel became Jehovah's wife (Deuteronomy 5:1–3; 6:10–15; 7:6–11).

The prophets regarded this covenant relationship as a marriage contract.<sup>8</sup> Ezekiel 16:8 uses the words of the wedding night to describe the covenant at Sinai and the relationship between Israel and Jehovah. Thus, in the first stage of her relationship as the Wife of Jehovah, Israel entered into a marriage contract and this marriage contract is the Book of Deuteronomy.

#### **Stage Two: The Great Adultery**

Despite stern admonishments to remain faithful to her Husband, several Old Testament prophets charge Israel with a great adultery. Jeremiah 3:1–5 states that the nation was not merely guilty of a one-time adultery, but of playing the harlot

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Psalms 28:9; 33:12; 78:62, 71; 94:14; and 106:40.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: Part 1," 37.

with many lovers. Verse 20 says that Israel was indeed like a wife who adulterously abandoned her husband. This adultery broke the original marriage contract according to Jeremiah 31:32. Ezekiel 16:15–34 is an extended description of this great adultery. Hosea 2:2–5 also describes this adultery. In spite of God’s manifold blessings to Israel, she turned from God to play the part of a prostitute and was guilty of the great adultery.

### **Stage Three: The Separation**

Because of this adultery, Isaiah 50:1 describes a separation that occurred between God and the nation in Isaiah’s day.

*Thus saith Jehovah, Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, wherewith I have put her away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities were ye sold, and for your transgressions was your mother put away.*

Deuteronomy 24:1 indicates that a husband needed to write out a bill of divorcement to finalize a divorce. By Isaiah’s time, Israel’s adultery was so great that God withheld His many blessings from her, namely those which Deuteronomy says Israel would receive, if she remained faithful. This removal of material provisions caused many in Israel to say that God had divorced His wife. Therefore, God told Isaiah that He had not yet divorced His wife, because He would have given her a bill of divorcement. Rather than a divorce, a separation had occurred, caused by Israel’s sins. In Isaiah’s day, God and Israel were not divorced, but they were separated. This separation lasted approximately one hundred years.

### **Stage Four: The Divorce**

Even after the one hundred year separation (when God continually withheld the Deuteronomic blessings), the nation still failed to return to God, her husband. Thus, God finally needed to divorce His wife, Israel. To a great extent, most of Jeremiah’s

book describes God's bill of divorcement from Israel, especially Jeremiah 3:6–10. After again declaring Israel guilty of adultery (3:6–8), God finally issued His bill of divorcement. It was necessary, because Israel had adulterously polluted its God-given land (3:9–10).

In Jeremiah's day, God divorced Israel. One hundred years of separation failed to produce repentance, so God had no other choice but to issue the bill of divorcement.

### **Stage Five: The Punishment**

Deuteronomy, the original marriage contract, clearly declares that if Israel proved unfaithful as Jehovah's wife, God would punish her for her unfaithfulness. Following the issuance of the bill of divorcement comes a long period of Israel's punishment for her sins.

Several Old Testament prophecies speak of Israel's punishment for her unfaithfulness (e.g., Ezekiel 16:35–43 and Hosea 2:6–13). Despite God's long program of punishment for Israel's sins, Jeremiah 3:11–18 speaks of a continual call to repentance.

To this day Israel is in the fifth stage of her historical and prophetic relationship with Jehovah, her Husband.<sup>9</sup> Israel is still in the period of punishment. The persecutions of the Jews around the world and the present world-wide dispersion evidence this. One stage yet remains.

### **Stage Six: Remarriage with Restored Blessings**

The last words of the Jewish prophets do not leave Israel in a hopeless state, but instead speak of a coming day when she will be restored as Jehovah's Wife. This will require a new marriage contract (Jeremiah 31:31–34). The New Covenant is in many

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. idem, "Israelology: Part 4," 53–54.

respects God's new marriage contract with the two houses, Israel and Judah (31:31). This new marriage covenant will be necessary because the old marriage covenant was broken (31:32). Although God was a good Husband, Israel strayed and adulterously broke the original marriage contract. This new marriage contract will again restore Israel to the place of blessing (31:33–34).<sup>10</sup>

### **Anti-Semitism**

A basic definition of anti-Semitism is “the hatred or persecution of the Jew.”<sup>11</sup> To dislike someone who merely happens to be Jewish is not anti-Semitism. To dislike a person *because* he is Jewish is anti-Semitism. It can be passive or active, mild or severe. Anti-Semitism comes in various forms: political, national, religious, economic, social, or theological. Anti-Semitism is an important concern of Israelology.

### **The Cause of Anti-Semitism**

Satan causes anti-Semitism. Revelation 12:1–5 indicates that Satan warred against the Jews from Abraham to Christ's first coming in an attempt to thwart the First Coming. His present and future war against the Jews seeks to prevent the Second Coming (Revelation 12:12–14). Since the basis of the Second Coming is Israel's national salvation, Jesus will not return until the Jewish people request this.<sup>12</sup> If Satan ever succeeded in destroying the Jews prior to this, his career would be eternally safe. This prompted a perpetual, unending war against the Jew. Once the Tribulation comes and Satan knows his time is short, he will expend all his energies to destroy the Jews once and for all. The biblical cause of anti-Semitism is Satan. God's permissive will

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<sup>10</sup> Ezekiel 16:60–63; Isaiah 54:1–8; 62:4–5; and Hosea 2:14–23 also describe this remarriage on the basis of a new marriage contract.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, *The Curse of Anti-Semitism* (Altadena, CA: Emeth, n.d.), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Fruchtenbaum, “Israelology: Part 1,” 32–33.

allows anti-Semitism because of Israel's sins. Nevertheless, Satan is the cause and the Gentile nations are his means.

### **Anti-Semitism and the Abrahamic Covenant**

Regarding anti-Semitism, Genesis 12:3 says: *I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse.* God has promised Abraham three things in this covenant:

1. from him will come forth a people or a nation,
2. to this nation God will give a land, and
3. God will bless those who bless this nation and curse those who curse it.

The third point is the present concern: *I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse.* Very early in human history God set down a principle to control the relationship of the Jews to the Gentiles. This statement is God's foreign policy to the Gentiles in their dealings with the Jewish people. Deuteronomy 32:8–9 restates it in wider terms:

*When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the children of men, he set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel. For Jehovah's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.*

It is not only God's program for Israel, but His program for the Gentiles as well. When God in His providence set down boundaries for the Gentile nations, He somehow took into account the number of Jews that will play a role in that nation's history.

The philosophy of history extracts principles from history to understand it and to gain insight into its future development.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> One must distinguish "the history of philosophy" from "the philosophy of history." The history of philosophy simply retraces and reviews man's attempts to explain his being, knowledge, and other concerns of philosophy.

The Abrahamic Covenant contains a unifying principle for understanding history: God blesses those who bless the Jews and curses those who curse them. This principle explains much in history that defies any naturalistic explanation. Time and again, Scripture demonstrates that this fact works itself out in the histories of both individuals and nations.<sup>14</sup> Many aspects of Jewish history make sense only, if one clearly understands God's philosophy of history. History repeatedly testifies that every nation that has ever dared to raise its hand against the Jew has eventually fallen. The Jew "has stood at the graveside of all his enemies."

The Bible properly explains the Jewish people's role in history. Although various anti-Semitic campaigns have cut down multitudes of Jews, the Jewish people as a distinct entity is indestructible. Jeremiah 31:35–37 indicates that those wishing to obliterate the Jews must first destroy the sun, moon, and stars. Then, and only then, could the Jews' destruction occur.

### **Israelology and Systematic Theology**

Systematic theology's twelve divisions help categorize biblical teaching about any subject. Because these divisions overlap with one another,<sup>15</sup> it is natural that Israelology intersects other divisions of systematic theology.

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<sup>14</sup> For a detailed development of this principle, see the author's *Hebrew-Christianity: Its Theology, History and Philosophy* (Tustin, CA: Ariel, 1983), 59–80.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Christology overlaps with Soteriology since any discussion of Christ must consider the salvation He provided. Discussions of salvation must look at Him. Angelology and Satanology examine some of the same issues, because Satan is an angel. Both overlap with Demonology since demons are fallen angels and Satan is their leader.

### **Bibliology: The Doctrine of the Scriptures**

While God is the ultimate author, He revealed both the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 4:8; 29:29) and the Old Testament as a whole (Psalm 147:19) through His chosen people, the Jews.

The New Testament concurs. Romans 3:1–2 expresses the Jew’s advantage as *much every way*. The key advantage is *first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God*. Romans 9:4 makes the same point, listing four facets of Scripture that all belong to Israel. The *covenants* are the four unconditional covenants. The *giving of the law* is the one conditional covenant, the Mosaic. The *service of God* is the whole Levitical system. The *promises* are the prophetic and messianic promises. These are all facets of Scripture, given to the Jews as an oracle of God.

The biblical covenants are part of Bibliology. Five of the eight biblical covenants are Jewish covenants. Four are eternal and unconditional, while one is temporary and conditional. These will be fulfilled by, through, and to Israel, not the Church. The Church partakes of the spiritual blessings of the Jewish covenants. It does not take over those blessings.<sup>16</sup>

Another way that Bibliology and Israelology overlap is the manner in which the New Testament quotes the Old. Jewish writers of the New Testament often gave a spiritual meaning or a new application to an Old Testament text without denying what the original said literally. Matthew 2 illustrates each of the four ways first century writers quoted the Old Testament.

The first is *literal prophecy plus literal fulfillment*.<sup>17</sup> In this manner Matthew 2:5–6 quotes Micah 5:2. Micah’s prophecy that the Messiah’s birthplace would be in Bethlehem of Judah is

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Fruchtenbaum, “Israelology: Part 2,” 54; and idem, “Israelology: Part 3,” *CTS Journal* 5 (October–December 1999): 45–46.

<sup>17</sup> David L. Cooper, *Messiah: His Historical Appearance* (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1958), 174.

literal in meaning. The term for a fulfillment of a literal prophecy in the New Testament is *a literal fulfillment*. Isaiah 7:14; 52:13–53:12; Zechariah 9:9; and others belong to this category.

The second is *literal plus typical*.<sup>18</sup> Matthew 2:15's quotation of Hosea 11:1 illustrates. The original context is not prophetic, but refers to God bringing Israel (His national son)<sup>19</sup> out of Egypt (the Exodus). Hosea referred to literal Israel, because the following verses speak of Israel quickly slipping into idolatry. The *literal* meaning in Hosea 11:1's context refers to the Exodus. Israel (God's national son) coming out of Egypt *typifies* the individual messianic Son of God leaving Egypt. The fulfillment was typical (not prophetic), since Hosea 11:1 was not prophetic. Matthew does not deny, change, or reinterpret the original literal meaning. The literal Old Testament event typifies a New Testament event. This is literal plus typical. Often, the Book of Hebrews cites Exodus and Leviticus similarly.

The third is *literal plus application*.<sup>20</sup> Matthew 2:17–18 quotes Jeremiah 31:15 in this manner. Jewish young men going into the Babylonian captivity passed the town of Ramah. Rachel (the symbol of Jewish motherhood) was buried near the town. As the young men went, Ramah's Jewish mothers wept for sons they would never see again. Jeremiah's *literal* meaning pictures the scene as Rachel weeping for her children. The New Testament cannot change or reinterpret the contextual meaning. Rather, a New Testament event having one similarity to an Old Testament event *applies* it. The point of similarity is that once again Jewish mothers weep for sons they will never see again, applying an Old Testament passage to a New Testament event. Everything else is different. Jeremiah's event happens in Ramah (north of Jerusalem), but Matthew 2:17–18 occurs in Bethlehem (south of Jerusalem). In Matthew, they die, but in Jeremiah living sons go

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. p. 49 in this article regarding Israel as "The Son of God."

<sup>20</sup> Cooper, *Messiah*, 176.

into captivity. This is literal plus application. The original text may be history (as with Jeremiah 31:15) or prophecy.<sup>21</sup>

The fourth is *summation*.<sup>22</sup> Matthew 2:23 illustrates: . . . *that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene*. No such statement occurs in the Old Testament. The plural *prophets* points to at least two, yet not even one uses these words. Unlike the first three categories, *summation* gives a summary of teaching by the prophets. The plural *prophets* is a clue. First century Jews despised *Nazarenes*, a reference to reproach and shame (John 1:46). The term *Nazarene* summarizes the prophets' teaching that people would despise and reject the Messiah (e.g., Isaiah 53:3).<sup>23</sup>

### Theology Proper: The Doctrine of God

An important aspect of theology proper is its study of the Person of God the Father. Israelology contributes to three of His six types of Fatherhood.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> A prophetic example is Acts 2:16–21's citation of Joel 2:28–32. Joel did not mention (speaking in tongues). Dreams, visions, the sun darkened, the moon turned into blood did not happen in Acts 2. Joel spoke of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the whole nation in the last days, while Acts 2 speaks of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on people in the Upper Room. This is not Joel's *all flesh*, but one similarity, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, had unusual manifestations. Acts 2 does not change or reinterpret Joel 2, nor does it deny that it will have a literal fulfillment when the Holy Spirit will be poured out on the nation. It applies one point of similarity to a New Testament event.

<sup>22</sup> Cooper, *Messiah*, 177.

<sup>23</sup> Another example is Luke 18:31–33. Using the plural for prophet again, Jesus states that the time for climactic fulfillment has come: the Messiah will go to Jerusalem, be turned over to the Gentiles who will mock Him, treat Him shamefully, spit on Him, scourge Him, and kill Him, but He will rise again the third day. No single prophet ever said all this, but the prophets together did.

<sup>24</sup> The first three types of Fatherhood lie outside of Israelology: (1) Father of Christ (Matthew 3:17; 11:27; John 1:14, 18; 3:16–17; 8:54; 14:12–13); (2) the Father of creation (1 Corinthians 8:6; James 1:17); and (3) the Father of all angels (Genesis 6:1–4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

He is:

1. the Father of all men,<sup>25</sup>
2. the Father of Israel,<sup>26</sup> and
3. the Father of believers.<sup>27</sup>

Gentile unbelievers belong to the first category only; Jewish unbelievers to the first and second. Gentile believers belong to the first and third, while Jewish believers to all three categories.

Another aspect of Theology Proper concerns God's work of election. Israelology clarifies Israel's national election.<sup>28</sup>

### **Christology: The Doctrine of the Son**

Israelology and Christology overlap, because Jesus is Jewish. The Messiah was to be of the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the Tribe of Judah and the family of David. Indeed, He was to be the ideal Israelite and is called by that name in Isaiah 49:3: *Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom I will be glorified*. Verses 5–9 distinguish this individual Israel from the nation of Israel. The New Testament does not try to prove the Jewishness of Jesus; it assumes it to be true and too obvious to require proof. The genealogies show Him to be of the Seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the Tribe of Judah and the family of David (Matthew 1:1–16; Luke 3:23–38). Hebrews 7:13–14 and Revelation 5:5 emphasize His lineage from Judah. People recognized Him as a Jew (e.g., the Samaritan woman in John 4:9). In Romans 9:5, while listing what belongs to Israel, Paul states. . . *of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh*. . . Galatians 4:4 describes Jesus as One who was *born under the law*, showing His Jewishness, a necessity for Him to be able to

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Acts 17:29; Ephesians 3:14–15; Hebrews 12:9.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 32:6; Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 3:4; Hosea 11:1; Malachi 1:6.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Matthew 5:45; 6:6–15; John 1:12; Romans 8:14–16; 1 John 3:1.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: Part 1," 30–31.

*redeem them that were under the law* (4:5). Hebrews 2:16–18 also links His Jewish identity to redemption.

Two of Jesus' many messianic titles pertain to Israelology. *Son of Abraham* stresses that Jesus is a Jew. The second, *Son of David*, emphasizes that He is a king. Christ's offices include prophet, priest, and king. Israelology emphasizes that, as king, Jesus is the king of the Jews and will exercise that role in the Messianic Kingdom.

In relation to His temptation, theologians generally recognize Christ's representative role with all men (Hebrews 4:15) for He suffered temptation in all three areas of 1 John 2:16 (lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life). Jesus also played a representative role with Israel. This has five manifestations:

1. *Son of God* applies to Israel (Exodus 4:22–23; Hosea 11:1) and to Jesus (Matthew 2:15; 4:3, 6),
2. Israel (1 Corinthians 10:1–13) and Jesus (Mark 1:12–13) faced wilderness testing,
3. *forty* applies to both testings (forty years<sup>29</sup> for Israel and forty days for Jesus),
4. the Holy Spirit was present with Israel in the wilderness (Isaiah 63:7–14) and with Christ in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1), and
5. Jesus resisted Satan's temptations by citing Deuteronomy (God's covenant book with Israel).

This representative role shows that where Israel the nation failed, the ideal individual Israel (Isaiah 49:3) succeeded.

Israelology also emphasizes the nature of the Kingdom that Jesus offered to Israel. Merely defining it as a spiritual kingdom in which He rules in men's hearts is inadequate. Why? The view only involves individual salvation and many Jews did accept the

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<sup>29</sup> Numbers 14:34 assigns forty years of wandering for the forty days leading up to the spies reporting that Israel could not take the land.

Lord's offer. Israel's leadership could not speak for the nation about a "heart kingdom," nor could He "take away" a "heart kingdom" from the people of Israel. Accordingly, Jesus offered the Messianic Kingdom (a national issue), something that they could (and did) reject nationally.<sup>30</sup>

The earthly ministry of Jesus was primarily to Israel (Matthew 15:24) and He came to Israel as its Savior (Acts 13:23). Thus, He forbade His disciples to go among the Samaritans and Gentiles, but limited their ministry *to the lost sheep of the house of Israel* (Matthew 10:6). Only after the resurrection did they receive a wider commission (Matthew 28:18–20).

### **Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

Israel will receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days. This outpouring will bring about Israel's national salvation preceding the Second Coming.<sup>31</sup>

### **Angelology: The Doctrine of Angels**

Michael, the Archangel, holds two positions in the angelic hierarchy. First, he is the only Archangel (or chief-angel) in authority over the other angels. Second, he is also a Chief-Prince (Daniel 10:13). Michael is one of a number of Chief-Princes. Each Chief-Prince's main function is to serve as a nation's guardian angel. Michael is the Chief-Prince over Israel (Daniel 10:21) and his work on behalf of Israel enables it to survive the Tribulation (Daniel 12:1). Michael's role as Chief-Prince led him to dispute with Satan over the body of Moses (Jude 9).

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. *idem*, "Israelology: Part 2," 39–47.

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 32:15; 44:3; Ezekiel 39:29; Zechariah 12:10; and Joel 2:28 (quoted in Acts 2:17) mention this outpouring.

### **Satanology: The Doctrine of Satan**

Satan has a special antagonism against Israel, because God is working out His redemptive program through this nation. Thus, *Satan stood up against Israel* and tempted David to number Israel, causing many Jewish deaths (1 Chronicles 21:1). Satan appears frequently in heaven to accuse Israel before God (Zechariah 3:1–2). This is also why his primary activity in the Tribulation will be to try to destroy Israel permanently (Revelation 12:6–17). Satan will be largely responsible in gathering the Gentile armies against the Jews in the Campaign of Armageddon (Revelation 16:12–16). Again, Satan is the source of all anti-Semitism.<sup>32</sup>

### **Demonology: The Doctrine of Fallen Angels**

Demons share Satan's hatred of the Jews and help in his attempts to destroy them (Revelation 12:1–4). They will assist in gathering the Gentile armies against the Jews at Armageddon (Revelation 16:13–14).

### **Anthropology: The Doctrine of Man**

Israelology clarifies how God views mankind. From a racial standpoint, all of humanity is either Jewish or Gentile.

### **Hamartiology: The Doctrine of Sin**

Only one element in Hamartiology overlaps with Israelology: Israel's national sin. Specifically, the *unpardonable sin* or the *blasphemy of the Holy Spirit* refers to Israel's national rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus (Matthew 12). This led to rescinding the Messianic Kingdom offer, the introduction of the

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: Part 4," 43–53.

Mystery Kingdom, a radical change in the ministry of Jesus for the remainder of His time on earth, and the A.D. 70 judgment.<sup>33</sup>

### **Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation**

In John 4:22, Jesus told a woman from Samaria (a nation that despised the Jews) that *salvation is from the Jews*. This is true in several ways:

1. Jews recorded God's program of salvation in the Scriptures,
2. though salvation was and is always by grace through faith, the content that saves believers came through the Jews,
3. the Savior was a Jew, and
4. the first proclaimers of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone were Jews.

Israelology clarifies the content that the Old Testament saints needed to believe in order to be saved (based upon progressive revelation). Covenant Theology's insistence that Abraham, Moses, and Paul all needed to believe the same thing to be saved is wrong. Soteriologically the Old Testament must stand on its own merits in determining the content of its message of salvation.

Another important way in which Israelology overlaps Soteriology is Israel's national salvation when *all Israel shall be saved*.<sup>34</sup> Israelology emphasizes that the Messiah's death caused the Law of Moses to cease being a rule of life.<sup>35</sup>

Regarding the soteriological issue of atonement, five-point Calvinists argue that Christ died only to secure the elect's salvation and nothing more. One of their supposed proofs is

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. idem, "Israelology: Part 2," 39–47.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. idem, "Israelology: Part 4," 57–59.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. idem, "Israelology: Part 3," 27–35.

Matthew 1:21's statement that Jesus *shall save his people from their sins*. They define that *his people* as the elect, so Jesus came to die only for the elect.<sup>36</sup> Strict Calvinists often presuppose that only one people of God exists,<sup>37</sup> rendering an abnormal meaning of *his people* or *my people*. Israelology clarifies that those whom God calls *his people* are Jews (the nation), even when they are non-elect unbelievers. Even when Israel is in unbelief, they are still the people of God. This is obviously not always true in a salvific sense. It is simply the result of their national election. Such terms as *my people*, *his people*, or, *thy people* do not support limited atonement.

### **Ecclesiology: The Doctrine of the Church**

In relation to Ecclesiology, Israelology distinguishes Israel from the Church. It denies that the Church is Israel, spiritual Israel, or the Israel of God. It rejects the theology of transference. Although the Church today *partakes* of the Jewish covenants' spiritual blessings, it does not "take-over" those covenants. Moreover, the partaking is limited to the spiritual blessings, not the material or physical blessings.<sup>38</sup> A major purpose of the Church is to provoke the Jews to jealousy in order to bring them to saving faith (Romans 11:11–14).<sup>39</sup>

One of the local assembly's functions is to carry out the Great Commission. Romans 1:16 gives the procedure: This gospel which *is the power of God* is to go to the Jew first. The governing verb, *is*, is in the present tense, emphasizing continuity in both clauses: The gospel *is* the power of God and *is* to the Jew first. To misinterpret this verse to mean that the gospel was to the Jew first in the sense that it came to them first and that this is no

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<sup>36</sup> David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1963), 40. They also cite Isaiah 53:8, 11; and Luke 1:68.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology: Part 3," 37–41.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. idem, "Israelology: Part 2," 54; and idem, "Israelology: Part 3," 45–46.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. idem, "Israelology: Part 2," 55–56.

longer so, or that it was only true during the apostolic period, would mean that the gospel *was* the power of God, but no longer is. If the gospel is always the power of God to save, then it is always to the Jew first. The Greek word for *first* is *prōton*, meaning “first in time, in place, in order, and in importance.” The gospel, wherever and however it goes out from the local church, must go to the Jew first.

What is true of the local church is also true of missionaries. They must first take the gospel to any Jews who may be in their locale. Regardless of the place of calling, they ought to seek out Jews and present them with the gospel first. No special leading is necessary, because this is biblical. Many missionaries may object, but fortunately Paul is a biblical and apostolic example, although he was not called to the Jews:

*But I speak to you that are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I glorify my ministry; if by any means I may provoke to jealousy them that are my flesh, and may save some of them* (Romans 11:13–14).

On this point his ministry differed from Peter’s (Galatians 2:7–9). An understanding of Romans 1:16 makes Paul’s actions in Acts comprehensible. Acts illustrates Romans 1:16’s doctrinal point: the gospel is *to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*. The Church of Antioch actually first sent Paul out on missionary work in Acts 13:1–3, even though he was commissioned to be the apostle to the Gentiles in Acts 9. As of Acts 13 the apostle *of the Gentiles* went out *to the Gentiles*, yet the principle of Romans 1:16 still stands as Paul’s procedure shows. Paul always went to the Jews first.<sup>40</sup>

Although Scripture is very clear, many believe that Acts 28:25–28 argues against it. These concluding words and Paul’s declaration that the gospel will now go to the Gentiles, causes

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. Acts 13:4–5, 14; 14:1; 16:11–13; 17:1–2, 10, 16–17; 18:1–4, 19; 19:8; and 28:16–17.

some to assume that the gospel is no longer to the Jew first, that God has now changed His evangelistic program, superseding Romans 1:16, which was written before Acts.

It does not mean that the gospel is no longer to the Jew first or that God has changed His program of evangelism. Comparing this passage with Acts 13:44–48 and 18:5–6, which contain the same pronouncement, shows the meaning. These passages surface Acts 28:25–28’s true interpretation: a local shift, not an overall change in the program. After the Jews of Antioch of Pisidia rejected the gospel (Acts 13:44–48), Paul went to the city’s Gentiles. Upon leaving, he went to the *Jew first* in Corinth (chapter 14). When the Corinthian Jews rejected the gospel (Acts 18:5–6) he turned to Gentile Corinthians. When he left the city, he went back to the *Jew first* in chapter 19, despite saying that he would now go to the Gentiles. Thus, when Roman Jews rejected the gospel, Paul went to Roman Gentiles. He did not shift his practice. Acts 28 only continues the procedure already in progress, presenting the gospel to the Jew first before turning to the Gentiles.

Similarly, Romans 15:25–27 emphasizes giving to messianic Jewish ministries. Stewardship and giving is part of Ecclesiology. The basis lies in Gentile believers partaking in Jewish spiritual blessings. This obligates them to share material blessings with Jewish believers.

Another aspect of Ecclesiology deals with living out the spiritual life in this age. Israelology’s contribution is that the Law of Moses is not the rule of life for the believer today, but only the Law of Christ. God did not give the Mosaic Law to the Gentiles or the Church, but only to Israel, so it never applied to others. It applied only to Israel, but now has been rendered inoperative, even for Jewish believers. The Sabbath law does not apply today either to Saturday or Sunday.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Fruchtenbaum, “Israelology: Part 2,” 46–50.

Even so, Jewish believers do have the right to live and maintain a Jewish lifestyle as long as it conforms to New Testament truth. A Jewish believer may freely observe many commandments of the Mosaic Law, of Judaism, and many Jewish traditions as long as he does not violate New Testament truth, principles, or commands. Jewish believers also have the right to plant Jewish oriented local churches (messianic congregations) with a Jewish worship style and format as long as everything is consistent with the New Testament.

### **Eschatology: The Doctrine of Last Things**

Israel Future details this,<sup>42</sup> but the following summarizes the topics.

1. Israel was to become a state before the Tribulation,
2. signing the seven-year covenant between Israel and the Antichrist begins the Tribulation,
3. the Tribulation primarily relates to Israel, secondarily to the Gentiles, and not at all to the Church,
4. the 144,000 are literal Jews,
5. the Woman of Revelation 12 is Israel,
6. Israel's national salvation is prerequisite to the Second Coming,
7. Israel will have a national salvation,
8. Israel will have a national restoration,
9. a major purpose of the Messianic Kingdom is to literally fulfill unfulfilled elements of the unconditional Jewish covenants, and
10. Israel's distinct identity will continue for all eternity.

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. idem, "Israelology: Part 4," 39–62; and idem, "Israelology: Part 5," *CTS Journal* 6 (April–June 2000): 35–49.

### **Conclusion**

Israelology is a topic that extends throughout the Bible and throughout history. Even so, it is an area of systematic theology that has not received the attention that it deserves. This series of six articles recommends giving Israelology the level of recognition that it receives in God's word.

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Arnold Fruchtenbaum earned a B.A. degree from Cedarville College, a Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from New York University. He is the founder of Ariel Ministries, Tustin, CA, a ministry to Jewish people around the world; he holds Bible conferences in most English speaking countries around the globe. Arnold is also an adjunct professor at Chafer Theological Seminary. CTS accepts Dr. Fruchtenbaum's bi-annual five-week study tour of Israel for academic credit. His e-mail address is [ArnoldF@ariel.org](mailto:ArnoldF@ariel.org).